GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:332
ANSWERED ON:18.07.2017
Area of Forest Land
Somaiya Dr. Kirit

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the total area of land reserved for forests in the State of Maharashtra, area-wise;
(b) the number of people illegally residing on the forest land for several years, area-wise;
(c) whether the Government is formulating/has formulated any policy to allot pattas to these people for construction of houses and if so, the details thereof; and
(d) if not, whether the Government is likely to evict these people from the forest land along with the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)

(a) As per the India State of Forest Report, 2015, published by Forest Survey of India, the extent of Reserved Forests in Maharashtra State is 49, 546 sq. km. and the total forest area in the State is 61, 579 sq. km.

(b) As reported by Government of Maharashtra, at the end of March 2017, an area of 622.944 sq.km. of forest land is under illegal occupation in 97, 488 cases. The details of circle-wise no. of cases and area under encroachment are given in Annexure.

(c) As per the Guidelines under Forest (Conservation) act, 1980, construction of houses in Forest land is not permitted. However, as per the provisions contained u/s 3(i) (a) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, claims for "right to hold and live in the forest land under the individual or common occupation for habitation or for self-cultivation for livelihood by a member or members of a forest dwelling Scheduled Tribe or other traditional forest dwellers" if approved by District Level Committee, are being considered for such habitations.

(d) In the event of any forest land found to be under illegal occupation or forest right claim for the same land under Forest Rights Act, 2006, has not been considered by the District Level Committee, the same is treated as encroachment and the encroachers become liable for eviction.

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